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To: Area Administration/Human Services Area Coordinators
County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors
County Departments of Human/Social Services Supervisors
County Departments of Human/Social Services Child Welfare Workers

From: Mark D. Campbell, Director
Bureau of Programs and Policies

Re: The Safety Intervention Standards: Introduction to the Practice Standards and System Changes

The Safety Intervention Standards as well as associated changes in eWiSACWIS will go into effect on June 26, 2006. Staff from the Bureau of Programs and Policies, the Regional Offices, and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships have scheduled statewide roundtables throughout April 2006 to provide information that will support the implementation of these Standards. Curriculum is also being revised through the Child Welfare Training Partnerships to further support county agency staff in implementing these changes in practice. In addition, the eWiSACWIS project team will hold a web cast prior to the release of the changes in the automated system and will discuss the changes at both the April PAW/TAW meeting and the May Public Child Welfare Conference.

The Child Welfare Case Process Committee, as a part of the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), developed the Safety Intervention Standards to provide greater clarity related to safety management throughout the CPS case process. In addition, the committee, as well as child welfare staff statewide, identified the need to streamline the Ongoing Services assessment and planning process to better assist caseworkers in their work with families.

The issuance of the Standards, as well as statewide input regarding the current family assessment and case plan, necessitated changes in the eWiSACWIS system. As a result, a more focused assessment and planning process was developed through input by the committee and eWiSACWIS design sessions. These changes mirror the Safety Intervention Standards and focus on supporting families in making necessary changes to keep their children safe.

Impact of Safety Intervention Standards

The Safety Intervention Standards will provide greater clarity and direction for case managers and supervisors regarding those discrete tasks and activities necessary for thorough safety assessment and planning. This ranges from assessing parent/caregiver protective capacities as they relate to impending danger threats to child safety to assessing the safety of placement homes as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

Overall the requirements of the Safety Intervention Standards span the life of a CPS case (e.g., criteria for a protective plan and 17 rather than 21 impending danger threats to child safety). Currently, the Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines reference specific points in the case process related to safety intervention requirements. Specifically, new requirements of the Safety Intervention Standards include:

Safety Assessment and Planning

- Creating and documenting the protective plan when present danger threats to child safety are identified.
- Evaluating and documenting the safety of licensed and unlicensed homes when a child is placed as part of a protective plan.
- Reviewing the adequacy of the protective plan on a weekly basis (this does not have to be through face to face contact with parents and providers).
- Describing what is needed (e.g. services) for the child to return home with an in-home safety plan.

Ongoing Services

- A meeting between workers or counties when a case is transferred to review either an in-home or out-of-home safety plan.
- Communicating with parents and all providers/participants in the safety plan as the case is transferred to review their understanding of the plan, their roles and responsibilities, and to confirm their continued commitment/involvement.
- Monitoring an in-home safety plan:
 - Minimum of 2x/month face-to-face contact with the parents and the child.
 - Monthly contact w/ providers (this does not need to be face-to-face).
- Monitoring an out-of-home safety plan:
 - Monthly face-to-face contact with the parents, the child, and the out-of-home care providers. (If another entity is responsible for face-to-face contact the agency will document this as an exception.)
- Reassessing the safety of the placement (relative or foster parent) every 6 months as required by ASFA.
- Evaluating case progress every 90 days for cases that have an in-home or out-of-home safety plan.

Additionally, the Safety Intervention Standards include:

- Appendices with information to support and guide case practice.
- Greater clarity related to the safety analysis.
- Clearer guidance around identifying diminished or enhanced protective capacities.
- Greater emphasis on protective capacities in case planning as they relate to impending danger threats to child safety.

Changes in eWiSACWIS

The eWiSACWIS changes related to safety management documentation are based on the Safety Intervention Standards. The safety assessment will remain integrated into the clinical initial assessment as well as a stand-alone document in the system.

Safety Assessment, Analysis, and Planning

- The safety assessment is now integrated into the family assessment and case progress evaluation.
- Safety assessment information will pre-fill to the Family Assessment/Case Plan, Case Progress Evaluation, or a reassessment of safety. A case manager will be able to update and edit this information as impending danger threats are reassessed throughout the life of the case.
- The "Description of Safety Threats" tab is used to describe how impending danger threats are occurring in the family and is linked to the safety analysis.
- The "Plan Analysis" tab supports the decision making process related to child safety. In cases where a child may be unsafe based on the safety assessment and the non-maltreating parent or other adult in the home can and will protect the child, this tab is used to describe specific parent/caregiver protective capacities that will manage the identified safety threats. This information justifies that the child is safe and no further safety intervention is needed.
- In cases absent a non-maltreating parent or other adult in the home that can/will protect the child, the case manager proceeds with the safety analysis and plan. Safety analysis and planning guides decisions around whether or not services can be put in place in the home to control the identified impending danger threats. If an in-home plan can be implemented, a "Safety Plan Services" pop up will automatically take the case manager back to the "Description of Safety Threats" tab so that services/activities and a provider/responsible person can be identified to control the safety threats.
- The Out-of-Home Safety tab includes issues related to: 1) jurisdiction, 2) placement conditions, 3) whether the case participant is an American Indian child, 4) general placement information, 5) placement provider knowledge and skills, and 6) safety of the placement.
- Narrative sections have been incorporated into out-of-home safety planning to describe the family interaction plan and what is needed for a child to return home with an in-home safety plan.

Practice changes in Ongoing Services focus on using and integrating information from the Initial Assessment for Ongoing Services provision. Changes to eWiSACWIS were designed to pre-fill and copy-over information throughout the case process. Additionally, a case plan summary and a case progress evaluation summary are available that pre-fills goals and services so that case managers are able to readily share plans with families.

Family Assessment, Case Plan, and Safety Assessment (FA/CP)

- The Family Assessment, Case Plan, and Safety Assessment (FA/CP) is now one format, which, when created by the case manager, pre-fills narrative and safety information from

an approved Initial Assessment. The Ongoing Services case manager then edits and updates this information.

- The new Family Assessment is collapsed to three narrative sections (child functioning, parent/caregiver protective capacities, and family functioning) with the impending danger threats integrated into the format. Additionally, case managers will now develop and enter individualized case goals rather than the current generalized desired outcomes in the automated system.
- The Family Assessment, Case Plan, and Safety Assessment now require only one supervisory approval.
- The system automatically generates a Safety Assessment & Planning format that pre-fills impending danger safety threats identified during the ongoing services when the Family Assessment & Case Plan is saved. The supervisor will not be able to approve the FA/CP until Safety Assessment & Planning is completed.
- A tickler has been added to remind workers to create a Family Assessment & Case Plan 60 days from the approval of an Initial Assessment.

Case Progress Evaluation, Safety Assessment, and Case Closure (CPE)

- Case Progress Evaluations (CPE) will be due 90 days from the approval of the Family Assessment & Case Plan if the child is found to be unsafe during that process.
- Case plans can now be updated in the Case Progress Evaluation. Information from the FA/CP related to participants and goals pre-fills to the CPE. The case manager is able to document the progress and status of goals as well as revise existing goals or insert new goals to the case plan. The approved Case Progress Evaluation essentially becomes the working, updated case plan.
- The system automatically generates a Safety Assessment & Planning format that pre-fills impending danger safety threats identified during the Ongoing Services when the Case Progress Evaluation is saved. The supervisor will not be able to approve the CPE until Safety Assessment & Planning is completed. This also applies to case closure.

In conclusion, the Safety Intervention Standards and changes to eWiSACWIS are the result of a collaborative, statewide effort by stakeholders to enhance child protective services. Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) staff, along with staff from the eWiSACWIS project team, training partnerships and regional offices, will continue to be available to provide technical assistance as you implement these practice changes. I thank all of you for your contributions to this process.